

# Most rare coins hold '85 values in '86 register

By Roger Boye

**M**ost rare-coin values listed in the 1986 "Red Book" are unchanged from figures in the 1985 edition, yet another indication of the stagnant market.

Popular rarities such as key-date Lincoln cents and Jefferson nickels showed no price appreciation in the last year, while common silver coins [so-called "junk silver"] declined in value due to a continued slump in the silver market. Each year, hobby experts eagerly look forward to publication of the "Red Book"—coin collecting's most popular reference—to confirm trends in the market.

"Collectors didn't drive the market in the past year," said Kenneth Bressett, the book's editor. "The average coin [price] didn't do much of anything."

Scarce silver dollars, half dollars and commemorative half dollars in the top condition categories were among the few coins advancing in value. Experts credit those gains to buying from investors with big bank accounts, while many "average collectors" tended to sit on the sidelines.

Coin dealers are selling the just-released "Red Book"—known formally as "A Guide Book of United States Coins" by R. S. Yeoman—for \$5.95, the same price as last year's edition. The 1986 [39th] volume includes average "retail prices" for all U.S. coins.

● The federal government has begun accepting orders for sets of 1985-dated uncirculated coins, its second major hobby offering of the year.

Each set includes 10 coins, one of each denomination [cent through half dollar] from the Philadelphia and Denver mints. Those coins are regular "business strikes," unlike proof specimens which are made with specially prepared slugs and dies [1985 proof sets went on sale last March for \$11 each].

To buy an uncirculated set, send a check or money order for \$7 to the United States Mint, P.O. Box 7743, San Francisco, Calif. 94120-7743. There is no order limit.

● Hobby leaders already are raising money for a 1991 Chicago coin show that may prove to be the largest in the nation's history.

The confab will be the 100th anniversary convention of the American Numismatic Association, which was formed on Oct. 7, 1891 in Chicago. The ANA is asking its 35,000 members nationwide to donate \$91 each to support the Chicago convention and the writing of a book on the association's history.